

POL-23-8

XR-LAB-3-2-HANSEN

CHARGE
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MINECON
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MILGP-2
DEAN
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BRASILIA
BELEM
P ALEGRE
RECIFE
S PAULO
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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

A-405

SUBJ

Department of State

Ambassy RIO DE JANEIRO

September 1, 1970

Police Report on Death of OLAVO HANSEN

Brasilia A-46 of August 5, 1970; Sfo Paulo MacCon with
Pedrosa Horta of August 24, 1970

Press stories reveal that the Second Army Court has received a police investigatory report on the death of Sfo Paulo labor leader Olavo Hansen. The report is said to claim that on May 8, while in the custody of DGPS, Hansen complained of not feeling well and was taken to the Sfo Paulo General Hospital, where he died the following day. The autopsy and chemical-toxicological examinations determined the cause of death to have been poisoning by the substance 'Paration', used in the preparation of fertilizers and insecticides, products which were used in the industry in which Hansen was employed at the time he was arrested. The report says he was not observed to have poison with him during his eight days in police custody, but he may have concealed it on his person. It mentions Hansen's previous subversive associations, including his activities with 'Groups of Five', and notes his 1964 preventive arrest for Trotskyite activities. The logical deduction is that Hansen took his own life by swallowing poison, the report concludes, since captured subversives in many areas have killed themselves while being held, to make their deaths appear to be the result of ill treatment at the hands of the authorities.

Comment: It appears likely that the court and government authorities, who are most anxious to absolve DGPS of any responsibility for Hansen's death, will accept the police report as definitive and try to close the case. It remains to be seen whether the MDB and labor leaders allow this to happen. The police report is not likely to satisfy the MDB leaders, who have been pressing for a serious investigation of Hansen's death, nor the Sfo Paulo labor unions. All

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POL:DP/atthens:mrb

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POL:REJohnson

POL:DPhillips (in draft)

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parties are aware that the coroner's report stated Hansen had died of the intravenous injection of poison (see refs), which would be an unlikely means of committing suicide and would require some apparatus for injecting poison being available to him in jail. Reportedly friends of Hansen had earlier ascertained from the firm where he was employed that pure Parathion was not used there, but was received in weak mixtures, incapable of causing death if ingested in small quantities. There is also mention in the coroner's report of bodily injuries, which are not noted in the police report, but which obviously resulted from tortures.

 BOONERA

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